'Their learning becomes your journey'

Parents respond to children's work in creative partnerships

December 2007

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Overview

This research was prompted by anecdotal evidence and observations in previous research projects (Safford & Barrs 2005, Ellis & Safford 2005) that children communicate their enjoyment of school-based creative projects to their parents to a much greater extent than their work in the core literacy and numeracy curriculum. Data here confirm this: according to parent informants, when children are engaged in short-term or long-term creative projects they extensively describe these experiences at home. Furthermore, when creative projects in school are sustained, these home discussions appear to influence parents in a number of ways. Some parents feel they understand more about what their children are learning in school, and they begin to develop perspectives on their children as learners and on what constitutes learning in and out of school. Children's enthusiasm for creative projects also causes some parents to become critical of the core curriculum, and they perceive creative programmes as offering alternative long-term benefits which positively influence children's aspirations as well as their learning. In terms of their involvement in the school itself, creative programmes offer low-risk invitations which encourage some parents to engage with teachers and the whole school, in some cases taking on employment at the school as a result of initial involvement in creative projects. Such projects also involve some parents in social networks of other adults in the wider community. Whilst some parents may lack confidence to support their children in literacy and numeracy, they feel able to extend creative programmes at home by working alongside children and visiting cultural centres such as galleries and theatres. Finally, children's engagement with creative programmes leads some parents to reflect on themselves as learners and to take-up cultural and other

learning opportunities for themselves as well as for their children. The data here suggest that the benefits to children of work in school-based creative partnerships have a positive impact on parents as well, and that creative partnerships offer strong models for developing and sustaining wider family learning as well as parental involvement in children's learning.

1. Research rationale, data collection and methodology

Since 2003 Creative Partnerships has funded working relationships between schools, artists and arts organisations. The impact of these partnerships on children's learning has been widely documented (Bragg 2007, Ellis & Safford 2005, Safford & Barrs 2005, CARA 2005) and also noted by OFSTED (2003). There is now a national discussion about the importance of creative approaches to young people's education and of creativity across the curriculum (QCA 2003, DfES 2003). However this can sometimes appear in conflict with other, more prescriptive pedagogic agendas such as the directive on the teaching of early reading through synthetic phonics (DfES 2006).

One of Creative Partnership's stated research themes is parents' involvement in and responses to a creative curriculum. This research, *Their Learning Becomes Your Journey*, investigates this aspect of Creative Partnerships which had been anecdotally noted but not widely examined. With a group of Creative Partnerships schools, the research aimed to:

- identify factors in the creative agenda which engage parents and elicit parents' views on what constitutes a creative curriculum

- analyse different models and methods of parental involvement within Creative Partnerships programmes

- develop understanding of how creative approaches can foster parents' engagement in children's learning

Their Learning Becomes Your Journey aims to create a picture of the creative contexts and practices which involve parents in children's school learning and how these contexts and practices may help to build effective schools. This research also

aims to contribute to a wider understanding of the nature of parental involvement in children's learning, the nature of a creative curriculum, and how these domains interact.

Research questions

If a creative approach to the curriculum is beneficial to children, what are parents' understandings of these benefits? The research began with the hypothesis that a creative agenda engages parents more than the 'core' curriculum or the offer of basic skills, and that such engagement is due in large part to children's well-documented enthusiasm for creative projects. Our initial questions included:

- What do parents themselves think of creativity initiatives in schools? How does a creative curriculum reach parents in ways that the 'core' or 'basic skills' curriculum doesn't?

- What activities or approaches engage parents in the school and in their children's learning? Are there models or approaches that are more effective than others?

The research also addressed specific Creative Partnerships research themes examining access to a creative curriculum. These specific questions included:

- How are creative partnership experiences, activities and projects made available to parents and in what ways? How are creative partnerships and new learning opportunities for children explained and offered to parents?

- What is the impact and effectiveness of such experiences, activities and projects on parents' attitudes, expectations towards and about children's learning? Are there are patterns of exclusion and participation amongst parents in these contexts?

- Do parents feel that creative partnerships contribute to a distinctive school ethos or learning ethos? Do creative partnerships contribute to parental satisfaction with the school? Do creative partnerships impact on the wider school community?

This research hypothesised that because parents are partners with schools in children's learning, and if creative approaches are effective in engaging parents as well as children, then a creative curriculum holds potential positive benefits for wider family learning.

Data collection and methodology

The research began in the Spring Term of 2006 with a trial of school and parent questionnaires, and these were refined following feedback from senior school staff at three primary schools and one secondary school, and from a number of parents. The parent questionnaire (Appendix 2) was then used as an oral prompt document to ensure consistency in taped interviews. Senior school staff (headteachers, deputy heads or Creative Partnerships coordinators) completed written questionnaires (Appendix 1).

In the Summer Term of 2006, the questionnaire for senior school staff was sent to 200 schools which had funding from Creative Partnerships. Schools were selected to represent a wide regional distribution and a balance of rural, urban, large, small, primary and secondary schools (although there are many more primary schools than secondary schools which are involved in Creative Partnerships). From this national survey, 65 questionnaires were returned. From the returned school questionnaires, follow-up interviews with 16 senior school staff and with 34 parents in 13 schools were organised in the academic year 2006-2007.

Parent questionnaires

No of schools mailed with questionnaire	200
No of questionnaires returned	65
No of creative projects referred to in questionnaires	360
No of schools visited for follow up	13
No of parents interviewed in depth	34
No of school staff interviewed in depth	16

Ethnic origin of parents interviewed in depth

Other
3%

Asian/Asian British
13%

Chinese
3%

Mixed
6%

Black/Black British
6%

White British
69%
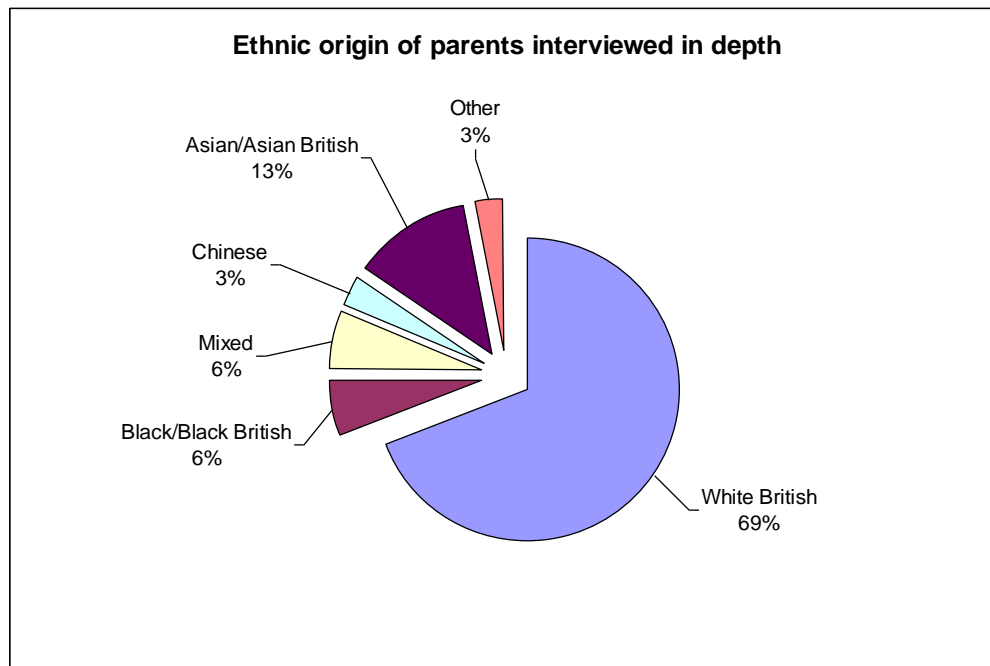
Interviews with senior staff offered insights into the responses of hard-to-reach parents who seldom came into school. Interviews were conducted in an informal, relaxed way to encourage parents and staff to expand on their views and recount their experiences. An interview schedule ensured consistency of questions, and parents and staff were encouraged to talk beyond the questions as well.

Issues in parents' involvement in schools and in the research

In writing up this research we are very aware that as researchers we depended on schools for contacts with parents and that parental involvement in schools, and therefore in creative projects, can be complex and sometimes contradictory. Senior staff admitted that core groups of 'regular' parents support creative projects and the school generally, and that the parents who agreed to be interviewed here were for the most part enthusiastic about the school. What does emerge in parent interviews

is how a schools' promotion of Creative Partnerships and other creative programmes such as some organised through Family Learning plays an important role in sustaining parental enthusiasm and involvement. Furthermore, the parents interviewed here are not restricted in composition to 'middle class' groups, as evidenced by parents' discussions about their own educational and cultural experiences (Section iv, p 29).

Schools which are successful in securing Creative Partnerships funding tend to be effective schools: they are able to liaise with external artists and organisations, develop programmes, demonstrate that funds are used appropriately and appoint a teacher-coordinator to oversee the management of projects. In these contexts levels of parental involvement also tend to be good, but not in all cases: in interviews and questionnaires, parents and senior staff felt that there was room for improvement in this area. Two main reasons were articulated for parents' non-involvement. Firstly, parents who were potentially interested were hindered by work and family commitments. Secondly, school staff felt that although many efforts were made to contact parents, economic and 'life' pressures often prevented their involvement. This research touches on some of these realities of parental involvement in schools and in children's learning.

Parents own learning opportunities
Unexpected topics which arose in many parent interviews related to parents' reflections on their own learning in relation to their children's learning, their view of children as learners and what constitutes learning, and how they felt that creative projects offer children significant life opportunities which the core curriculum did not offer. These adults may be characterised as high-involvement parents, and we suggest that there is a large group of parents who might be more involved in the school but need a low-risk invitation to do so.
A recent report by the Sutton Trust (Blanden, Gregg and Machin 2005) has highlighted decreasing opportunities for social mobility in Britain and the role of

education in potentially widening life chances for children. Interviews with parents in our research reveal that creative approaches to the curriculum can also increase such opportunities for parents. Parents living in areas of significant socio-economic deprivation describe how their interest in school-based creative projects resulted in their becoming permanent Learning Support Assistants and lunchtime supervisors, and our research indicates that their involvement had a 'ripple effect' on home-school communication. It is our hope that this research contributes to the wider development of such experiences and opportunities for all schools and parents.

2. Research literature and policy: parental involvement and creativity

In the landmark *Process of Education*, Jerome Bruner (1960) emphasised the influence of parents on children's 'predisposition to learn' (one of the four features of his theory of learning): those experiences which *'move the learner towards a love of learning in general or of learning something in particular'*; schooling itself, he said, was only a small part of what predisposed children to become learners and that education is not just about 'conventional' school matters such as curriculum, standards or testing, but about children's broader social, cultural and emotional learning (Bruner 1996). More recently, Desforges & Abouchaar's (2003) extensive review of research into the effects of parental influence concluded that 'good parenting' involves shaping the child's self-concept as a learner and identified parent-child involvement as being far more important to a child's school achievement than parents' social class or level of education.

There is much evidence that parental involvement and support in school plays a crucial role in children's life-long development. Parental involvement positively affects the child's academic performance (Fan & Chen, 2001) in both primary and secondary schools (Feinstein & Symons, 1999), leading to higher academic achievement, greater cognitive competence, greater problem-solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance and fewer behavioural problems at school (Melhuish, Sylva, Sammons et al., 2001). The earlier parents become involved in their children's language and literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer-lasting the effects (Mullis, Mullis, Cornille et. al. 2004). Through case studies, Hilary Minns (1999) has shown how children's knowledge about language and literacy is shaped by their home environment, and how parents actively influence children's attitudes and skills. Minns has also noted that *'such socio-cultural influences often go unremarked at school'.* Shirley Brice Heath (1983) has analysed how patterns of family interaction influence children's language development and

how some home language and literacy backgrounds are much more in harmony with school expectations than others.

Because parents are identified as *'partners in children's learning'* with schools (Griffiths and Hamilton, 1992), parental involvement in children's school experiences is a stated goal of national education policies. The DfES describes parents as *'a child's first and enduring teachers'* who '*play a crucial role in helping their children learn'*. According to the DfES, effective communication and good relationships with parents benefit both the school and the children: '*Children achieve when schools and parents work together*' and that *'Engaging and working with parents is one of the most vital parts of providing children with an excellent education'* (DfES Standards Site)*.*

Since 1998, UK schools have been required to have Home-School Agreements. These tend to emphasise the importance of good behaviour (of both parents and pupils), attendance, homework, punctuality and wearing school uniform. The school for its part undertakes to teach and care for the child. But the content or approach of the curriculum is rarely discussed. For example:

> *I/We undertake to*
> - *Ensure that my child attends school regularly and that absences are properly notified*
> - *Ensure that my child arrives and where appropriate is collected promptly at the beginning and end of the school day*
> - *Support the school's guidelines on behaviour and equal opportunities*
> - *Support my child in his/her homework and wherever possible promote opportunities for home learning*
> - *Ensure that my child goes to bed at a reasonable time on weekdays*
> - *Attend parents' evenings and discussions about my child's progress at school*

(Calverton Primary School, exemplar Home-School agreement on the

DfES Standards Site)

Parents in fact do much more than this. Many parents support schools economically, fundraising hundreds of thousands of pounds; parent volunteers carry out a wide range of in-class support such as reading with individual children, and offer skills and expertise in areas such as music, sport, sewing, cooking, building and gardening. Parents accompany classes on school outings and journeys, and also serve on school governing bodies. Many parents also work in schools as teaching assistants, learning mentors, and lunchtime and play supervisors.

Government initiatives

From1997, the New Labour government launched a series of initiatives aimed at involving parents in their children's learning and school experiences. Evaluations of projects such as Sure Start (Melhuish 2004, Aylesbury SureStart Evaluation Report 2002) and Bookstart (Wade and Moore 1998, 2000) have found that a large proportion of parents who participated in these projects became more involved in learning at home and school and that this involvement had a long-term positive impact on children's academic attainment. Melhuish (2004) has used a 'human capital' framework to analyse such programmes, identifying four groups of beneficiaries: children, families, the local community and the wider society. Melhuish found that positive outcomes in education, skills, health, behaviour, employment, economic and social well-being 'flowed throughout an individual's lifetime'.

The implications of the Sure Start and the Bookstart evaluations are that parental involvement in children's learning makes a significant and long-term positive impact beyond the realm of education. Children whose parents are involved show greater social and emotional development (Allen & Daly, 2002), and have more resilience to stress, greater life satisfaction, greater self-direction and self-control, better social adjustment and mental health, more supportive relationships, are more socially

competent, have positive peer relations, are more tolerance and exhibit less delinquent behaviour (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Basic Skills, Family Learning, Extended Schools and City Learning Centres are other significant strands in the government's agenda to raise pupil standards through parental involvement. These initiatives aim to provide increased opportunities for parents to become involved not only with their children's learning but with their own learning as well. Many parents now take part in a variety of programmes aimed at improving their own literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. These courses are often presented as opportunities for parents to understand and help their children in these areas of learning. These offers also tend to be aimed at adults who need to improve their job and life chances. *Skills for Life* (2001), the government's strategy for adult Basic Skills, highlights parents as a key priority, with a target set of 60,000 parents improving their literacy and numeracy skills through contact with their children and with schools in Family Learning programmes.

> *…we must ensure that we are working with parents to support literacy and numeracy activities with their children. Through schools, we have an excellent means of targeting those parents who do have literacy and numeracy skills needs and encouraging them to learn for the sake of their children.*
> (DfES, *Skills for Life*)

There is clearly a need for this type of intervention. According to one local Family Learning service, two-thirds of adult residents in the inner London borough of Southwark do not have sufficient literacy skills to function effectively in the economy. Our research here suggests that creative projects can offer a different, low-risk invitation to parents which can complement and enhance Basic Skills approaches.

Parents and the creative curriculum

Animating Literacy (Ellis & Safford 2005) and *Many Routes to Meaning* (Safford & Barrs 2005) offered glimpses into how parents respond to the opportunities of creative partnerships in schools, how parents and children may engage in creative projects at home and in the community, and how parents may see a transformation in their children as a result of such projects. A Year 5 teacher in *Animating Literacy* received a letter from a parent which described her son's response to work in filmmaking:

> *… his attitude towards literacy has changed from a negative one to a positive one. He came home and related tales of his literacy classes with an enthusiasm that I'd never witnessed before.*

Sometimes, however, only a chance encounter would reveal the depth of parent interest and the extent of home conversations.

> *By chance I bumped into C's mother in the playground, and told her I had had a conversation with C. about imagination. 'Oh was that you?' she exclaimed. 'He's been going on about that for weeks now! And you know, it's really made me think about what is imagination.'*
> (*Animating Literacy* drama specialist Susanna Steele)

There are numerous local examples of how the creative arts are effective in involving parents in their own and in children's learning. Some Local Authorities offer a wide range of popular Family Learning courses for *'adults and children having fun learning together'* (Wandsworth LA) where parents and children can take classes in digital filmmaking, drawing and painting, photography, drama, storytelling and song-writing. Whilst some of these classes take place in schools, all of them take place outside of school hours, effectively extending the school into the community.

Lambeth Education Authority pioneered the integration of the creative arts into Family Learning programmes through partnerships with the Royal Festival Hall, the Hayward Gallery and a number of other arts organisations and practitioners. They have found that this approach attracts hard-to-reach parents who had been remote from their children's schools. In Southwark, primary school parents were invited, and supported by teachers over a number of weeks, to write and illustrate their autobiographies in a book to share with their children. This was successful in drawing in parents, particularly fathers, who had little previous contact with the school. In Hampshire (2005) a performance poet worked for six weeks with mothers at an early years centre. The mothers wrote group poems on feelings and experiences of parenthood:

> *I grant you happiness*
>
> *I grant you health*
>
> *I grant you adventure*
>
> *I grant you wealth*
>
> *I grant you confidence*
>
> *I grant you love*
>
> *I grant you laughter*
>
> *I grant you long life*
>
> *I grant you consideration for others*
>
> *I grant you intelligence*
>
> *I grant you an opinion*
>
> *I grant you friends*

The parents in this group also wrote individual poems, and translated their writing into English from their home and heritage languages. These writing workshops for adults modelled how children engage in guided or group reading and writing practices in school. The parents gained insight and understanding into school

literacy learning, and their expressive writing based on their own experiences contributed to their own literacy skills learning.

These examples can be characterised as 'little c' creativity (Craft 2001), reflecting parent's lived and local experiences. They can also reflect the concept of 'ubiquitous' creativity, which entails skills of flexibility in responding to life changes rather than the consumption and production of artistic products (Banaji et al 2006). The element of play is also evident in these contexts (ibid.) and the concept of play as the foundation of adult skills in problem-solving and creative thinking, as parents are encouraged to work through similar types of experiences and processes as their children. *Their Learning Becomes Your Journey* aims to identify further points of contact between parents, children and creative approaches to learning in school settings

Parental roles

In a comprehensive review of psychological theory and research, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) identified four major constructs which are central to parental involvement in children's education.

- The first of these is parents' overall 'role construction', which defines their beliefs about what they are supposed to do in their children's education and which establishes a basic range of activities which parents 'construe as important, necessary and permissible' for their own actions with and on behalf of their children, e.g. *Do I think I'm supposed to be involved?*

- The second construct is parents' 'sense of efficacy' in helping their children succeed in school and the extent to which parents believe that their involvement can exert a positive influence, e.g. *If I'm involved, will it make a difference?*

- The third construct is parents' perceptions of 'the general invitations, demands and opportunities' from the school itself – the extent to which parents feel the school actively wants their involvement, e.g. *Does the school 'tell' me it wants me to be involved? Do teachers make specific requests and suggestions?* Parents also respond to child invitations, e.g. *Does my child want or need my involvement?*

- Parents are also influenced by their perceived life context which encompasses their knowledge, skills, time and energy, e.g. *Do I have time for this and do I have the necessary expertise?*

We found these concepts useful in analysing the data here. Whilst there is extensive research into parental involvement in children's learning and equally extensive research into creativity, there is little explicit investigative overlap in these areas. Likewise, government policy stresses the importance of parental involvement in children's education mainly at the level of behaviour and basic skills rather than within its recent promotion of creativity. According to a DfES research review (2003), regardless of parents' social class, family visits to museums, theatres or the opera have a positive effect on children's earning potential, educational attainment and 'civic engagement' later in life. Yet the DfES identifies these cultural experiences as 'leisure time' pursuits rather than activities at the heart of the learning process or as regular opportunities within the school curriculum. Yet domains of creativity and parental involvement do appear to interact in local projects where parents feel confident to engage in what Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler characterise as 'permissible' activities in a positive and inviting atmosphere. In the following sections, we explore how parents' role constructs influence their involvement with children's learning in the context of creative agendas in schools. We also examine school practices with regard to parents and creative projects.

3. Parents' involvement in children's creative learning: key findings

(i)   Talking about school at home

Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) note the influence of children themselves in promoting connections between home and school and that children play an 'active' or 'passive' role in mediating parental involvement; the extent to which children invite parents to get involved in their school work is influenced less by thinking it will help their achievement and more by their *pleasure* in being in the company of their parents. Creative approaches to learning appear to be generating many such opportunities as children communicate their enjoyment of creative projects to parents. Parents, in turn, reflect on their own core beliefs about what is significant to children's learning and development and their role in promoting and supporting that learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997).

Children's interest and enthusiasm provide openings for parents to communicate with children at home and with the school itself. In interviews, parents describe how children talk 'incessantly' about creative projects whereas normally they would not say much about school or school work. Because of the nature and level of children talk, parents feel they know more about what is going on in school.

> *Usually you ask them and they're doing 'nothing!' at school. They actually come home and tell you – and they can't wait to tell you, rather than you having to ask them. (Pauline)*

> *I've got to say, my eyes and ears were wide open because I couldn't believe what he was telling me [about the film animation work he was doing]. (Phil)*

> *They talk openly about what they've been doing. They're more confident at speaking. You don't have to drag it out of them. Everything's coming out of*

them...children tell parents and then parents feel they'd better come in and have a look. (Joe)

The kids never stopped talking about him [storyteller] the whole time he was in school. When [my son] came home he talked about him constantly as if he was like one of the teachers. Everything was 'Tony this' and 'Tony that'. They do use their first names and it does make the kids more relaxed with them. That reflected on parents. Because the kids were talking about it, parents felt they were involved in it. (Louise)

Display of animation sets at St Helens Catholic Primary School, Barnsley

Parents feel that creative projects lead children to become generally more enthusiastic about being in school and notice improvements in children's attitudes towards school as a result of creative projects, in terms of their own children and in their observation of the whole school environment.

I used to hear about the film-making every day – you [usually] never hear anything about school. It was less about that final event, the experience they

had of developing their ideas and shooting the film brought them far more than a single event...it's brought a greater enthusiasm for school which has a knock-on effect on everything they learn at school. ...[my son says] 'I can't wait to get in on Friday because we're filming this scene' – I think that's got to have a positive effect on everything else that goes on that Friday to be honest. (Steve)

The children interact with each other a lot more, and better, boys and girls. It develops their social skills. (Sandra)

It gives them experiences to talk about. With us [when we went to school], you just done your school work and that was it. (Barbara)

Parents are often impressed with the skills children learn in creative projects, such as filmmaking, animation, sculpture, dance, singing, interviewing, or gardening. Parents express appreciation for the diverse resources and cultures which creative programmes bring into school. They also support the inclusive nature of creative programmes where every child has a voice and can participate.

My son in year 6 is severely dyslexic. Now he knows he can express himself through construction, through artwork. The projects gave him confidence. He knows now that he has particular learning styles. He has been able to build up his awareness and confidence through creative projects. I know that we would have had real behaviour problems on our hands otherwise...Creative Partnerships should promote itself to parents. Parents WANT this. I made an appeal to a secondary school to get my son in there next year – based on its Creative Partnerships funding, continuity and philosophy. (Kerry)

They can all excel in something, even if it's not academic. It's sensitive to their needs. (Nicole)

If they don't thrive in the more rigid thing then this gives them an opportunity to feel that they're doing well without having to tick boxes. (Fiona)

Learning shouldn't be just about sitting them at desks and the teacher talking at them, and them writing notes and answering questions. Learning comes through play, through art, through watching other people, through doing things at home and at school. We all have different learning styles, don't we? We can't say what works for one child will work for the next. (Pauline)

What do they get out of it? Enjoyment!...I wouldn't want them to go to a school where it was purely reading and writing and getting answers out of them. I want them to have a wider scope for what they think about and what they enjoy, and I want them to enjoy school and life beyond school. I know they'll learn to read at the end of the day. But I do want them to have a really wide, rich experience of life....If I knew a secondary school was a Creative Partnerships school I would think about sending them there – it would be a factor in my consideration. (Catherine)

These observations and understandings appear to support parents' sense of efficacy in relation to their children's learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997): they perceive creative programmes as making a positive difference to their children and want actively to support their children's developing enthusiasms and talents. This support can involve parents promoting and extending children's interests beyond the school-based project, in family outings and through clubs or classes during school holidays, after school or weekends.

(ii)   Views on children as learners and the curriculum

Through discussions at home, parents feel they learn a great deal about their children as learners and are sometimes surprised at children's developing interests and the high quality of their work. Some parents begin to see children's learning in wider contexts, and parents who have had more traditional experiences of education express their changing views of how children learn and where and how learning can take place.

It has definitely changed my view about what learning is about for children. It's fun! I look at them when they are doing these things and they are learning so much, and they've enjoyed their day. And every time I go into town now I have to stop at the bookshop for art books. (Tanya)

For my son, it was the project 'How Things Are Made': how bridges stand up, structural things. Now, if ever we go down Trent Bridge, we have to pull over: 'Let's have a look at this bridge and how it's made!' It's sparked my interest. I can see it's made and see it's there, but I had ignored it. Now, I want to know how it's made and how it stays up there. Wonderful questions no parent can answer! We went to Lincoln Cathedral which I thought might be too formal, too boring. My son loved it, the fact of the architecture, the windows with the light coming through. We all loved it – his dad, his sister. It was a place that normally we would have drove past. But we thought, we'll stay and have a look. Now when we walk through town, it's looking at the buildings and the windows and everything - then coming home and building it with Connex! It was all from that project. (Nicole)

We went to the art gallery – and we probably wouldn't have before. We were there about three hours. It was such fun. (Geraldine)

Parents feel that creative projects play a significant role in boosting children's confidence, self-esteem and pride and that these benefits are linked to children being able to express themselves in such projects. Some parents voice amazement at their children's new-found willingness to try new experiences, volunteer for performances or speak confidently in new situations.

> *You can't do it wrong, can you? You interpret something or make it your own. [My daughter's] confidence bowled me over. My husband sometimes says some of the things they get involved in are too grown up – but he went to [the performance] and ate his words. I cried! It was lovely. It was so professional, to get up on a real stage and do it for everybody. There were 2-300 people there. (Geraldine)*

Creativity and the core curriculum

Some parents are critical of the core curriculum, which they perceive as being heavily weighted towards literacy and numeracy, and they feel that children need regular opportunities for wider learning. These parents feel that much of the core curriculum is sedentary and sometimes irrelevant, and that creative projects are opportunities for children to be engaged in meaningful work. Several parents made the point that older children continue to need active, hands-on experiences for learning.

> *My son is in Year 5 now and he's got a love of film and filmmaking that'll be with him for life. The real danger I think is that the National Curriculum is so tight and dull and boring. All the exciting things, all the creative stuff, everything gets squeezed out so you have maths and literacy and science. These things [creative projects] give such a fantastic opportunity for children to learn outside that rigid curriculum that's trying to standardise them all. This is the bit that sets them free. (Steve)*

We could be even more creative. Creative things are very extra-curricular and they shouldn't be. I wonder now about my daughter [age 9] – do you do anything besides English, Maths and Science? (Katriona)

The National Curriculum is responsible for that. The school tries, but really it's what you do at home. A lot of children miss out because their parents can't organise that. The whole community needs educating. We [our family] go rambling and exploring – that's creativity on a different scale. It doesn't have to be painting because some people might be scared of painting or making something. Children get a lot out of the creative arts, it's relaxing, it's a multi-disciplinary thing and it's your own, and you can never go wrong. (Stephanie)

But you can get your academic work wrong, very wrong sometimes. It's the only time – with the right adult guidance – you can have freedom to expand. A lot of children really flourish and we should do more of it. (Katriona)

Some parents notice a positive impact on children's work in other areas of the school curriculum, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening; they believe that creative projects made children generally more imaginative in literacy and in all-around ways.

It's made a difference in several areas. Literacy- they're more imaginative, they're more creative in the work that they're writing about. You can suggest that it's because of what's been happening with the media project. Certainly in art, it's benefited him in that sense. And non-school work, photography, he's got a little secret passion for photography, and we're no different to any other family - we're not professionals – we've got a digital camera and a camcorder and we use it for occasions. But I don't know where he's got that from – it must have come from school. Something that most primary kids don't have the chance to have a go at. It's another tool in the toolbox, isn't it?

Whatever topic they're doing, they can link it. Even the littlest, who is 6, he'll sit and draw for hours and hours. Ask him about it – he knows about all this work and he's not been in school that long, he can tell you how they do it. (Joe).

My kids write plays, and they perform them, they give us all tickets and we line all the chairs round and watch them perform. They write stories now That you wouldn't have got from them before. Their imagination now runs riot, where before it used to be 'I don't know what to write about' and 'Dad can you help' but now it's set the imagination rolling. (Phil)

Parents note children's fascination with the external artist and observe that children had a different learning relationship with this professional to the class teacher. Parents feel that the arts partner is able to see unique qualities of their children which teachers are not always able to see. Parents observe that children were aware not only of the special skills of external artists but of their reliability and the repeated nature of interesting work. Parents also report children noticing changes to their class teacher as a result of work in the creative project.

It was very positive for children to see teachers in a relaxed environment. My daughter said she was surprised to see one of the teachers laugh! There isn't a lot of time to laugh in the classroom, is there? It teaches that teachers are human. (Katriona)

They've always spoken very highly of the people they've worked with. They use the first names and that breaks down barriers. They're always full of enthusiasm for the next time and the time always happens as well. They're not hoping its going to happen – they know it's going to happen. (Melanie)

It's such a leveller with the teachers because they're learning from scratch as well. (Steve)

Parents following a craft workshop, Jessons Primary School, Dudley

Creative programmes in schools appear to enhance parents' overall sense of 'role construction' (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997). Their observations of children's responses to work in creative programmes cause some parents to consider and articulate their beliefs about children's learning and the curriculum. Children's responses to creative learning opportunities cause some parents to articulate the kinds of learning which they feel is 'important, necessary and permissible' and to promote the opportunities which they consider worthwhile by supporting the school's involvement in such work.

(iii)   Ongoing effects and life opportunities
Parents say they are able to observe the positive impact of school-based creative projects on their children in areas beyond the specific skills of the project work. They observe that children's experiences make them confident to try something new and

to test out new or unfamiliar experiences, and parents notice this effect continuing as primary children went into secondary school. Parents also view children's participation in creative projects as preparation for adult life and jobs in creative industries.

It opens things up for them, things they might not think of doing. It builds up. When they move on to secondary school they can go on to build on it. Once they get given a chance, they realise they can build on it and move on. (Orla)

If you want to look at journalism or anything creative, photography, it gives them a leg up. (Phil)

I've got one [child] who wants to write, as a job, and that's come from this [media] project. (Joe)

Working with real artists and musicians – if I was to say to [my daughter] that violin playing was beautiful, she'd say 'oh yeah', but when it's someone who does it for a job, a professional, they take notice. (Geraldine)

It gives them an outlook on ambition. My daughter will come home and say 'I want to be an actress, a fashion designer' – it's always something on the creative side rather than a mundane office job and I think that's really good. I know that when I was in primary school I didn't have any idea of what I wanted to do when I grew up, so talking about a career and a creative career is just fantastic. (Louise)

Parents' comments here would seem to reflect an understanding that creativity offers children 'knowledge, flexibility, personal responsibility and problem solving skills' which will help them to compete effectively in future employment contexts (Banaji et al. 2006: 56). Parents observe that children also become more confident in

communicating with adults, starting with the external arts partner, and that this confidence extends to people outside school in communities, museums, galleries and theatres. Parents see this confidence as a life skill that would positively impact children's futures, as growing confidence would enable children to attempt a range of new experiences and activities.

I would say speaking and listening to people. It's improved their ideas of what people think about things. They interviewed people and when they expected to get a negative response and they got a positive one, they were surprised. They interviewed parents, local people. Councillors, teachers and other children – and they expected the adults to be totally against it [a skate park].
(Melanie)

They had a chance to do something different, to learn different kinds of music and instruments. And they had a chance to work with people who have a lot of talent – you would normally never get that opportunity. My youngest has left school now but the musicians are still in touch with her about other kinds of workshops and she has opportunities to carry on. (Debbie)

My daughter was involved in some brass tuition. She has never played an instrument before. She did trombone. She came home and told us all about it, how she had to do it. And she was quite quiet. The confidence there, just from doing something new – she would never have tried it before. And it was something that was easy to get a chance to do – but it wasn't easy to do, she was quite scared about doing it in the beginning. But once she tried it, she thought – I've learned something new. I've tried it and I can do it. And now, she tries something new and she is not scared to try new things. Giving new skills and learning experiences is valuable. She'll take it through life. Now she has experiences of enjoyment rather than thinking, oh that's not for me. It's had an ongoing effect. (Linda)

For my daughter, it was the drama, the art, expressing herself. I didn't see the connection at first, art and drama. But when she could express herself in drama it helped her to express herself in art, and vice-versa. Now she is in year 9 doing art as a result of carrying on the art and fast-tracked in drama because of the confidence and push she had in primary school where it all started. (Jeanette)

For us it was the garden. We couldn't use our own garden at home at the time because it was vandalised all the time. For a whole year she would make things and bring them to the school garden. (Monica)

Garden at Seagrave Primary School, Nottingham

Creativity and real-life opportunities

Parents see creative projects as more than one-off opportunities for children to try something new. They express beliefs that creative projects offer children future employment potential and give them 'an outlook on ambition'. They view the arts partner in school as a real-life professional who offers children a model of hard work, enjoyment and success in a field of work that is personally motivating and interesting. Parents observe how children became aware of a range of roles and possibilities in different areas through contact with arts partners and that the artist's professional standards influence children's confidence, learning and aspirations. Parents also express beliefs that creative projects instil valuable qualities in children such as application and self-discipline.

> *My son for 9 months now hasn't spent a single penny of his pocket money because he's saving up for this 600-quid camera. It's going to take another two years! But now he won't spend a penny because he wants a proper camera – and that is purely from this project. I am pretty impressed with the discipline of it...My oldest son didn't have these opportunities and he struggles with hobbies and what he wants to do. My younger son used to be quite shy – a meek child really – not putting himself forward – and now he's not just behind the camera he's out in front, and he's become a performer which he never was before in the slightest! His whole personality has grown, and it's hard to get that from school, I think. (Steve)*

> *It's teaching them skills for when they leave school as well. It's teaching them from an early age about careers, self-discipline, knowledge to do what they are actually doing, so when they get older they can turn around and say – well I enjoyed doing that, so I can take it on. (Phillip)*

Parents view creative projects as offers of real-life opportunities, not as insignificant add-ons to the core curriculum, and some parents feel that the school 'core'

curriculum is less 'real' and meaningful to their children than the creative curriculum. They feel that children are learning skills and acquiring knowledge beyond what family and traditional schooling can offer, especially in terms of addressing a broad range of children's individual learning styles and special needs. They express strong views that they want their children to access wider life experience beyond school, and that creative partnerships are instrumental in these experiences.

(iv) Parents as learners

In interviews, parents would reflect on their own school and learning experiences in light of their observations of their children's work in creative programmes. Many of the parents we interviewed finished formal education at age 14 or 16, and children's work in creative projects would often elicit parents' memories of their own school experiences which could sometimes be upsetting and distressing. Parents are particularly aware that creative programmes offer children choice and freedom in the school context and that the external artist would treat children with consideration and respect.

> *When I was in school, everyone played the guitar. But I couldn't play the guitar, so I was stuck playing the tambourine in the corner. And I hated it. There was no other choice. I was humiliated. With things now, there are so many new instruments from cultures around the world, everyone can have a go and not feel inadequate. I feel it's really important for every child, regardless of their ability, to have a go at something and feel equal to the child next to them as much as possible. With these creative projects, everyone wants to have a go.*
> *(Chrissie)*

I went to school in the dark ages. We never had anything like this. We were made to stand on chairs. If you did something wrong, it was OK to completely humiliate children. (Stephanie)

I was caned and hit with a ruler. You couldn't have an opinion. Now, today, children are asked what would you like in your garden, could you design it? We were never asked. (Katriona)

To be honest school for me is blanked out because I honestly hated school. I can't remember my mum ever going to school – only when there was trouble or when you were poorly. (Tanya)

The only enjoyable memories I have of school are the Christmas play and the Harvest festival. Concerts if you was lucky. (Louise)

We used to be rulered and caned at the school, board rubbers and pieces of chalk, flying missiles, just for talking. (Denise)

You daren't breathe when I was in school. Parents didn't get involved. My mother would never have had a syllabus from me, she wouldn't have had a clue about what I was doing in school. (Sandra)

I remember being told to draw your idea of a theme tune for a show, and I couldn't think of anything to draw, because I had never really done anything creative. (Barbara)

Such responses are reminders that official promotion of parental involvement in children's school learning is a fairly recent initiative, and that many parents will feel unsure of how they should fulfil such a role. Parental involvement can be assumed to

be always positive and desirable, but in interviews parents reveal how such experiences can sometimes be unsettling. Parent interviews highlight the need for schools to offer 'low risk' invitations to become involved and to be sensitive to the ways in which some parents may feel about school and about learning. In Interviews, parents would explain their own and others' reluctance to become involved in their children's school learning:

> *A lot of parents work don't they. But a lot of it I think is a fear – a fear that they'll have to get involved, and commit. Not maybe so much commit – but they've seen the standard of homework that their children get from this school and some can't do it, and basically they don't want to make themselves look stupid cos they don't understand what their child's doing. They put maths and English courses on for the parents, you get a qualification out of it. (Phillip)*

> *(CLPE: Is that enjoyable?)*

> *No. (Phillip)*

> *Some children don't have such a great time at home. Mum and Dad don't feel they have the time for involvement. It's not about money – lots of things are free. When parents work, it's difficult. In secondary school you tend to lose track of what is going on. You find out about an event – but after! (Jackie)*

> *A lot of children come to school and are bombarded with English, Maths and Science. Then they go home. Mum and Dad work. The TV is a babysitter. A lot of children may not be creative at home, or do baking or crafts. I know a lot of parents would like to – but life doesn't always give you the time. (Stephanie)*

Positive experiences of school for parents

Parents sometimes feel under pressure from work and other commitments, and they can feel insecure about their lack of skills. Parents report however that once they had taken the first step into school they began to feel part of a school community. Once parents have positive introductory experiences they are prepared to do more, and that social networks are significant in sustaining their involvement. Creative programmes can offer opportunities for parents to meet other parents and in some cases to organise adult versions of children's experiences such as a craft club or an adult choir.

> *After being responsible for two children daily, it [the poetry class] was uplifting…I was able to relax and get into it because I saw my daughter was well looked-after in the crèche. It's not like we were losers or anything, but the poet was a very learned person and she gave us the time. (Anthony)*

> *Like my wife, she came along, and she really lacks confidence, she won't even bring the kids to school. She absolutely loved it, the gardening day. I said look, just come along, just come and help. (Phillip)*

> *Parents will go in more for the creative stuff because they don't feel threatened by it. They do struggle – that's why the Samba dancing was so amazing. We had about 40 parents and not just mums but mums and dads. You feel parents are more relaxed than coming in for an evening on how your child learns maths. (Geraldine)*

Interviews with parents suggest that it's not always easy or straightforward to become involved in the life of the school and children's learning. Parents who do take the first steps across the school threshold see how their own self-development

and children's learning can be mutually supportive and can help to build the school as a community.

Children like to know that I like the same things as them. Then you have a good understanding of what they are doing. (Denise)

Plus when they've actually seen you doing it yourselves, they feel confident to come home and say, mum, dad, how do you go about this? They can see that we're learning as well as they are. ..we don't mind looking stupid! We dress up, we dressed up as ancient Egyptians and they loved the funness of it – they love to laugh at adults, don't they. I can walk in the playground now and all the kids come up. Because you've shown an interest, they show an interest and start asking questions.   (Phillip)

When parents come to the concerts, the music can be quite different to what they are used to. They like to hear something new – it's quite exciting when something new comes along. (Orla)

Parents on creative journeys

By observing their children, some parents are inspired to do something for themselves, visiting museums, taking up classes, hobbies or employment. In some instances, parents have formed adult versions of children's projects, such as an adult choir and orchestra. In other cases, permanent parent groups have formed which continue to support a range of school projects. A number of mothers had become full or part time teaching assistants or lunchtime play supervisors after being drawn into the school through a creative project. For women who have been out of the workplace after having children, creative programmes offer paths to jobs and further qualifications.

I run a craft and card-making club. That was something that came from school. Now I supply three shops. And I've got three boys in my club, learning different techniques of card-making. (Jeanette)

Having been out of the workplace for 5 years, it brings your confidence back. I was just a mum, now I'm back to being a person. The first time I had to stand up in assembly because of the parents' group that we run, I was so nervous. Even my daughter said- you was scared mummy weren't you? But the last time I did she said – 'You was better that time mummy!' (Tanya)

Their learning becomes your journey as well…You start to remember things and you think – I know how to do that, I can do that! (Asa)

Once you start you tend to move on to other things. Now I really look forward to my morning in school, it's my little few hours. (Sarah)

It raises our awareness of what's going on. Because while they are learning, we are learning through them as well. We went to school years ago and we forget. They're learning a lot more than I ever remember learning. (Tanya)

Because creative projects often take children to cultural centres outside of school and children talk about these experiences at home, parents themselves become more aware of cultural opportunities in their areas. Some parents visit museums and galleries for the first time as a result of children's involvement in creative programmes. Sometimes the visit is because children want to go again, sometimes it is because the arts partner makes families aware of such opportunities, and sometimes schools organise outings which include parents. In some projects, parents accompany children on visits during school time and later visit these locations again with their children on weekends or in school holidays.

We went to Doncaster, the museums in Hull, the Earth Centre. It was a brilliant place, we had a fantastic day, and the children adored it. We couldn't believe it when they closed it. (Sandra)
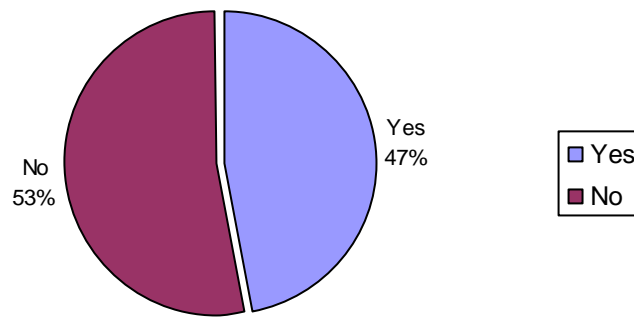
Parents' experiences of cultural activities

Just under half of schools in surveys stated that they know that parents' involvement in creative projects had led families to visit or use cultural institutions outside school. Both schools and parents note that many cultural centres are free, and for many families it is a question of time, confidence and transportation as well as knowledge in order to access these experiences. Some parents view such opportunities as life-changing experiences for themselves as well as for their children.
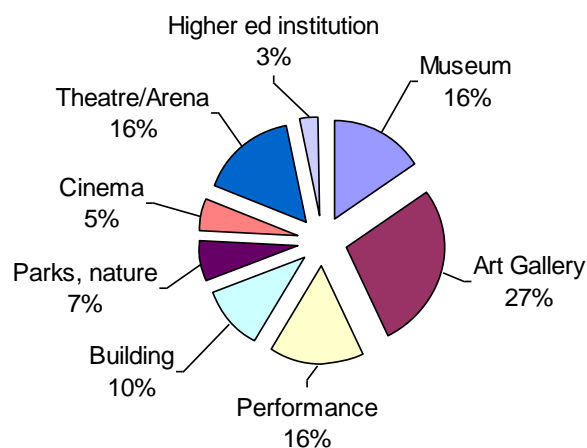
When I see my daughter playing the cello in the orchestra and I heard those people from the Guildhall playing, I think – is it too late for me to go and learn an instrument? It prompts me to do something as well. I've joined the choir now. I think – maybe I could do that. (Helen)

I went with my daughter to the Tate. I had never been there before, never been to an art gallery. And I thought – this is brilliant. My parents never took me to a gallery or a museum. We went to the zoo. And it would have cost money. That was our background. And I am asking myself – why am I so interested now? It might have changed my life. I would have still been me – but maybe I would have gone to university. (Jackie)

Has involvement in creative projects led families to visit or use cultural institution outside school?

No
53%

Yes
47%

■ Yes
■ No

Type of cultural institution visited by parents as result of creative project in school

Higher ed institution
3%

Theatre/Arena
16%

Museum
16%

Cinema
5%

Parks, nature
7%

Building
10%

Art Gallery
27%

Performance
16%

In some cases, parents feel that they need to experience the same sorts of activities and similar 'play' processes as their children such as dressing up, dancing, listening to stories, working with paint and clay, or making crafts, because their own school experiences lacked these opportunities. Some parents, once they have had similar experiences to what their children were doing, become more confident about helping and supporting children in other areas of learning. Some parents express an even greater awareness of their own learning and growth than that of their children.

(Phillip) We made a disabled ramp for the forest part of the garden. We've done bird boxes and hedgehog boxes for the small garden.

(Sandra) And we built a willow arch, a tunnel, we cleared the tunnel completely.

(CLPE) Did you know how to make a willow arch?

(Sandra) Well I do now. The professionals helped us.

I had never done anything like it [craft club] before. I never had the time. But now you seem to make the time, that little half an hour. People get offended now if I send them a store-bought ordinary card, they say, where's my hand-made card? Children love to make their own cards, crafts, anything. And they love it when you're in school, they love it when they know you're taking part. (Michelle)

Our houses are taken over now – every spare bit. It's infectious! It's nice to learn something new that you can pass on to the children. We made gift boxes, embossing, loads of things. You start meeting people. We [Michelle] had never met before. It's nice for the socialising and for the crafts. And it helps you to get to know the school, how things run, you get to know the staff and know what goes on. Then – you can really talk at home about what goes on in school and share things together. It's really nice. (Sarah)
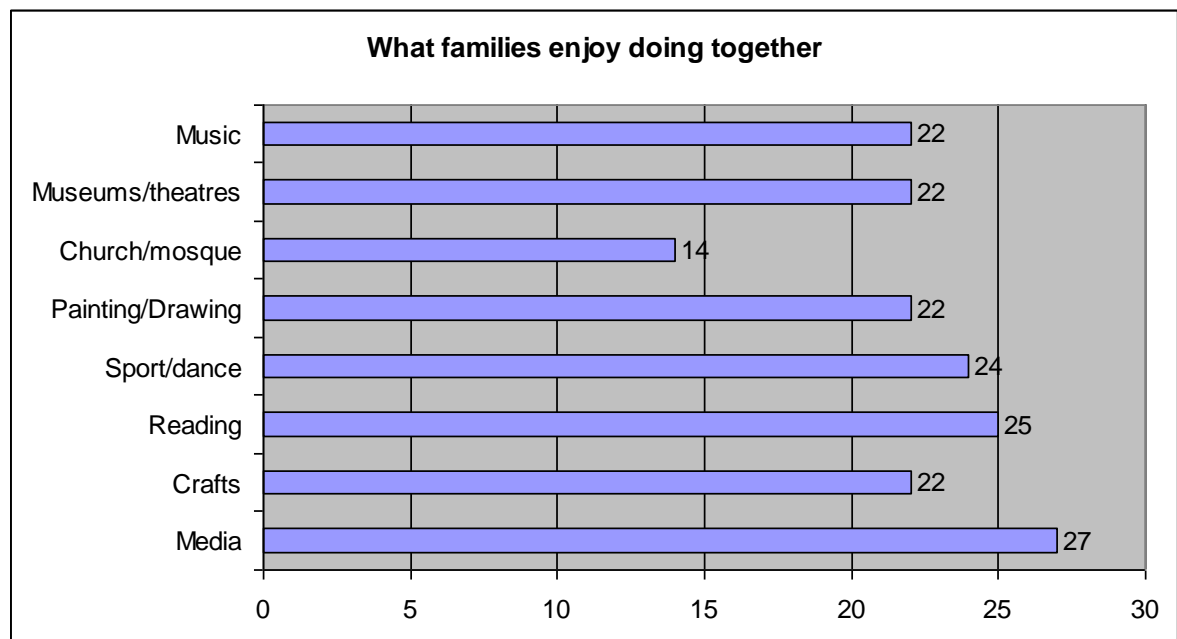
Parents enjoy projects which they feel relate to their own skills and experiences and what they feel they can do at home with children. Conversely, creative programmes often make schools more aware of what parents can offer as craftspeople, artists, photographers, web designers and musicians. Sometimes parents have these skills but are unable to afford tuition for their children and creative programmes can fill this gap.

In an area like ours, musical instruments were always considered posh. You paid for your lessons. But here, children can try an instrument and see if they like it, without having to pay for expensive lessons. My daughter is trying the trumpet. I have got instruments at home. I play saxophone, clarinet and flute. But I wouldn't afford to buy her proper lessons or buy her an instrument. (Linda)
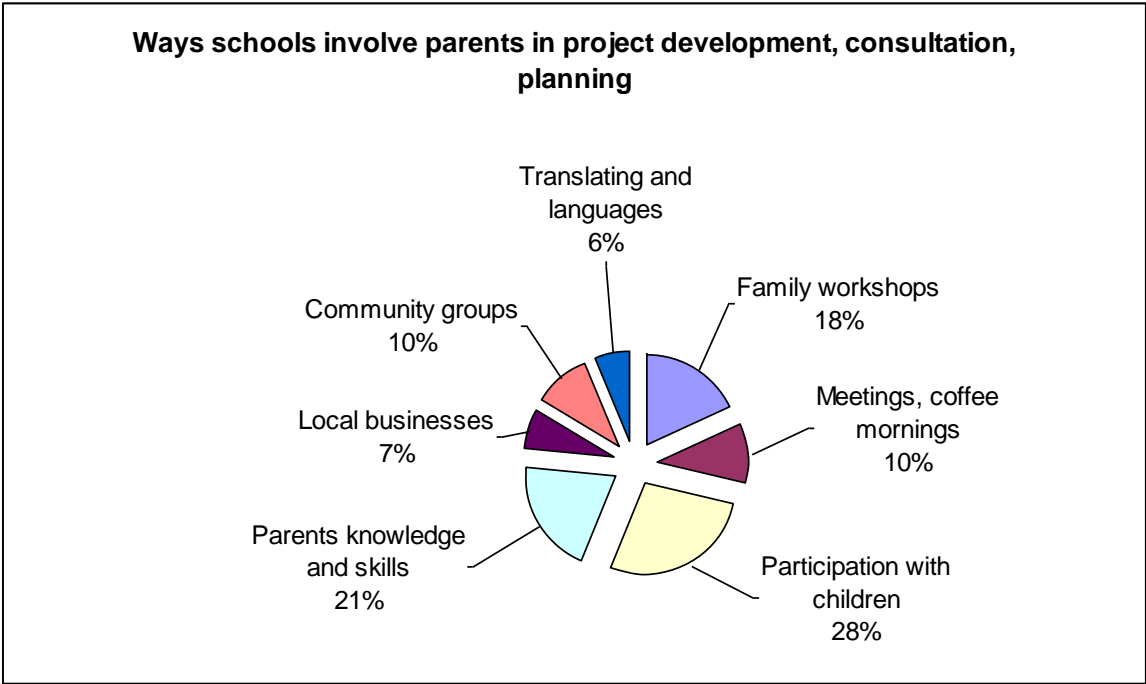
Family activities at home

At the end of interviews, parents were asked to complete a brief form outlining the kinds of activities they enjoyed at home with their children. Indications from these parents are that many already enjoyed a range of activities at home with their children which schools could take into account when developing creative projects.

What families enjoy doing together

Activity	Value
Music	22
Museums/theatres	22
Church/mosque	14
Painting/Drawing	22
Sport/dance	24
Reading	25
Crafts	22
Media	27

In interviews, parents perceptions of creativity and 'cultural activities' encompass a wide range of experiences: making Christmas crackers, visiting museums, gardening, joining a choir or life-drawing class, enjoying children's performances or exhibitions, visiting a university. There is little distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, and parents are equally enthusiastic about projects which are familiar in the

home context (such as gardening) and those which are unfamiliar (such as making animated films). Where projects are familiar, parents feel confident to support children's activities; where projects are unfamiliar, parents feel they are learning alongside their children. Depending on the kind of project, parents' involvement with the children at home in school creative projects took place in a number of ways, as show in the table below:

Ways schools involve parents in project development, consultation, planning

Translating and languages 6%

Family workshops 18%

Community groups 10%

Meetings, coffee mornings 10%

Local businesses 7%

Parents knowledge and skills 21%

Participation with children 28%

In interviews, parents express a strong view that creative projects should be routine and sustained rather than one-off extra-curricular experiences.

(v)   The school in the community and the community in the school
Parents believe that creative projects made children feel proud of their school, particularly those projects which involve exhibiting or performing in public spaces or which result in a permanent aesthetic feature for the school such as a sculpture, mosaic wall or a garden. Parents are aware that not every school has opportunities to be involved in Creative Partnerships and are anxious that these opportunities should continue. They express strong desires for repeat and consistent experiences

for children, and are concerned that cuts in funding might curtail or end creative programmes.

> *It was really good to go somewhere and perform. I felt quite excited about that for the kids. They were on stage. People were listening. That was really good. I had never been there [the cultural centre] before. It was an opportunity for me as well. I had seen pictures on the telly, but it was my first time there. Now, I see pictures on the telly and I say – I've been there! (Gayle)*

> *Anything where you have an audience outside of your family is always a different experience, anything you do where other people are watching. (Katriona)*

> *There is pride…you need to have that pride attached to your school, it keeps you there, it's part of your community. You can talk past and say – hey, I did that" the ownership is important (Maggie)*

> *They get a feeling of being part of the community. Like the mosaic, it's always going to be there. For our girls, it was their last year and it was leaving their mark on the school. They know it's still there. Even now, in secondary school, they still come and play in this playground because there aren't any other places to play around here. It would be nice to do more work that is lasting. (Brenda)*

In some cases, parents feel that creative projects lead to all-around better communication from the school, and they express appreciation for projects that 'break down' walls between school and community through exhibitions, performances or parades which take the school out into the community.

Community performances and exhibitions enable parents to see their children's school work in a heightened, professional context. Creative programmes which involve children in activities beyond the school (performing, exhibiting, visiting) help parents to see children's learning within a community and sometimes a professional context, and encourage some families to become involved in cultural activities outside the school. These out-of-school locations are important in engaging parents who may be reluctant to enter the school itself.

Garden, Margrave Primary School, Hull

4. School perspectives and practices

Whilst some schools in the survey make an effort to reflect the wider interests and skills of families and communities through creative partnerships, most do not explicitly take this approach. However, over half of the schools responding to our questionnaire feel that creative projects help parents to perceive their children's learning and achievements in a more positive light. This reflects the findings of a survey of headteachers by Mackey and Ullman (2006) who report that

> *A lot of headteachers interviewed (625) felt that as a result of the school's involvement with Creative Partnerships, parents had been encouraged to become more involved with the school. Of these, 17% of headteachers felt that parents had become 'a lot more involved' and 45% felt they had become 'a bit more involved'. About a third (35%) reported 'no change' in the level of parental involvement.*

Because Creative Partnerships does not offer criteria for schools on access for parents (as Family Learning models do), schools are free to make projects and programmes available to parents in a range of ways.

In surveys and interviews, senior staff observed that creative programmes could involve families simply by altering the look and feel of the school, through displays of children's work with professional practitioners. One senior member of staff noted that the 'softer, friendlier look of the school' created a welcoming environment for parents. But whether they aim to involve parents or not, schools report that creative projects enhance existing practice and raise the school's profile in the community, and that these processes in themselves draw parents into school, as these responses in questionnaires indicate:

> *People are noticing what's going on and come over to find out more.*

Performances in particular have raised the profile of the school and helped improve disability awareness. The local response to our work has been immense.

The publicity received from projects and the 'word of mouth' effect has raised the school profile within the local arts community. This has resulted in an increase in admissions from families within this group which in turn has generated even more arts based activities at school. We have a huge range of parent skills and many are prepared to support the school.

We have more parent helpers in school as a result of them coming in during creative weeks and asking about helping on a more full-time basis.

A child who moved away – the parent came back and said 'There's nothing going on there (at the new school). I want him to come back. This place is exciting.' He came back.

It gives parents a feel-good factor about the school, which you can't buy.

Parents looking at plans on display at Bevois Town Primary School, Southampton

Parents at exhibition at Bevois Town Primary School, Southampton

Senior school staff in interviews say that parents are 'more than willing' to come into school 'for things that aren't going to threaten them if they can't read or write properly'. Some schools have made an effort to offer parents 'low-risk invitations' through creative projects:

They enjoy the practical things: gardening, massage and jewellery courses. We had a make-up course and a dozen parents came, Christmas crafts, keeping fit, line dancing – anything we can think of! We're trying to show that just because you had a bad experience [in school] it's not going to be bad now. You're not going to be asked to do anything that you can't do. (Headteacher MH)

Quite a lot of parents have a barrier around coming into school. They don't feel very confident in their own literacy/numeracy skills or feel that for them school wasn't a very positive time. They feel it's too daunting to come in and be part of something. If we're doing arts projects we get a higher level of response because it's less threatening. Less would come in for a literacy or numeracy project.. There were 40 parents [for a storytelling session] which was unheard of. We never get that kind of response. (Headteacher SJ)

Parents often lack confidence in their own ability to contribute to their child's learning. Once we can get them here they usually enjoy it and comment positively. Sometimes it is difficult to explain what a creative project entails specifically and they are wary of getting involved. (Coordinator PH)

Creating positive attitudes

Headteachers in interviews and in questionnaires express an understanding that creative projects enable the school to communicate with parents about how and where children can learn, and that creative projects can sometimes transform parents' expectations about their children:

We took the children to the art gallery and they came back absolutely buzzing about it. Then you can send home publicity about all the art gallery has to offer in terms of family workshops, and all of a sudden parents begin to think, yes, that's something we could do. It's starting with the children and using that to raise parents' awareness of what the locality has to offer… It's not just 'come and watch your child perform', but more about the process, getting parents to sit in and see what we're doing. (Headteacher SJ)

Some of our parents, carers and families had no or few aspirations for their children to move onto higher education. By visiting a University and seeing their children performing there and putting on an art display, many eyes have been opened and there is a realisation that University and Arts careers are for 'them' as well as the rest of the population.

Many of our parents/carers live disadvantaged, somewhat challenging lives and schooling was not a 'good' experience for them. The more we can share and encourage involvement in school activities, the better are the prospects for their children staying in education and having work/life aspirations.

It is observable in questionnaires and in interviews with senior staff that once schools begin exploring creative approaches to the curriculum they feel confident to continue and extend such approaches: the more projects schools had carried out, the more committed those schools were to extending the boundaries of the curriculum, the timetable and where learning could take place. One school reported that creative programmes were 'giving us a greater sense of what is out there and how we can make links with it'. In interviews and questionnaires, staff reported that creative programmes were working beyond the school, involving artists, businesses, local and national organisations, and that parents were another 'out there' group that creative projects could encompass.

We've formed an adult orchestra and an adult choir as offshoots of school projects. We found out one parent was a Grade 8 violinist! The choir is open to everyone, so we have parents, grandparents, support staff involved. We've performed a lot in the community. It gave parents and members of the community and members of staff a lot of confidence and a role in the community. Some people were quite lacking in confidence, now they're performing in front of an audience. (Headteacher JW))

In relation to creative projects, schools call upon parents in different ways - sometimes eliciting viewpoints and opinions, or asking parents to contribute resources or skills. In some instances a school's stated purpose in a creative project is to encourage parents to think differently about learning creatively or how children learn through play, for example asking parents to comment on ways in which the playground environment could be enhanced through an interactive display of designs, post-it notes and photographs. .

It has definitely made parents more aware of and positive about creative education, and the importance it has for children. Movement and creative play has been celebrated and shown to be crucial for development...this has been important, because the community has often been on the fringe of events. (Headteacher FC)

Some schools make practical home-school links by asking children to carry out work at home such as making puppets, interviewing grandparents, making and decorating banners, bringing memorable objects to school or researching the local area.   In some very effective examples, project websites enable parents and extended families around the world to see children's work and contribute their own responses.

Informing and communicating with parents

Schools communicate projects to parents through displays, letters, workshops, school newsletters and websites, and make these experiences available to parents at different points of entry:

1. At planning stages, through interactive displays

2. Before projects begin, to explain concepts, skills and timelines, at a workshop or coffee morning

3. As projects are underway, where parents provide resources and support, carry on or finish work at home with children

4. To celebrate completion, where parents attend exhibitions or performances, visit a cultural centre with the class, or are given CDs or DVDs of children's work

Many schools regularly include information and articles about Creative Partnership projects and events in their newsletters:

"As we approach the end of another year I must say how much our involvement in Creative Partnerships projects has added to the creative curriculum. The work has given so many children the chance to work with our main professional partners, C Media, in the making of different kinds of film – animation, live and documentary. The film made by Class 4 in Robin Hood's Bay, which included interviews with locals, a tour of the historic village as well as animations made on the beach added so much to our annual Class 4 residential visit and was enjoyed by the parents / grandparents who joined us at the Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. Seeing the children's work at the cinema was an absolute delight. Many parents and children saw this piece of work as well as the other films that we have made this year on Class 5's "Big Screen" over the two Parent Evenings last week. I received so many positive comments.

Year 6 pupils have this half term been involved in the making of on our own animation. The film, "No Worries!" is based on some of the fears of moving on to secondary school, which is obviously a topic close to many of their hearts at the moment. The film is very much of our own making and has been praised by C Media as a most professional piece. I am very grateful to Mrs Clare Shepherd who has played a major part in the production as well as the children, of course, who wrote the script, designed the "sets" modelled the characters, filmed every movement, recorded the voice-overs and created the music. I am absolutely delighted that our young children are able to have such a wonderful opportunity and experience the whole range of artistic skills in such an exciting project due to our involvement in Creative Partnerships.

Next school year, we are to create our own TV – style news programme "St Helen's Live" as well as a web site that will involve children, staff, parents, governor and the local community. Watch this space!"

(Excerpt from end of year newsletter, St Helens Catholic Primary School, Barnsley)

Pages from newsletters, Crab Lane Primary School, Manchester

How schools inform parents about creative projects

Local media 8%
Letter home 13%
Permission slips 14%
Newsletter 15%
Community event 7%
Notices 9%
Personal invitation 7%
Translation into any languages 1%
School event or assembly 11%
Parents meeting 6%
Word of mouth 9%
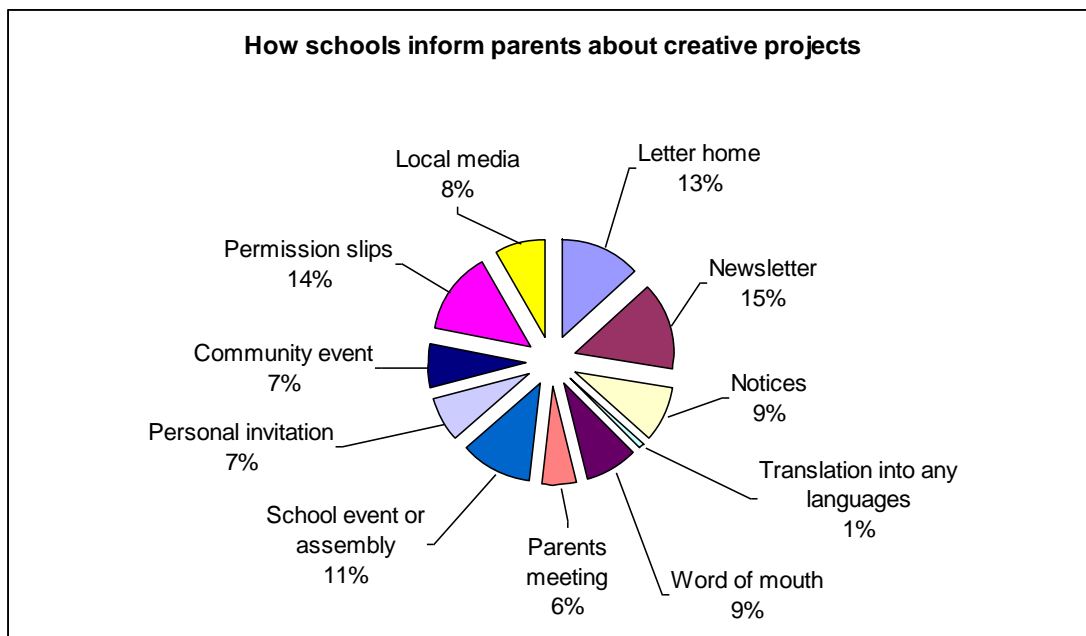
Some schools have attempted to involve parents in a much more formative way:

We're developing a committee that is staff, pupils, parents, governors and

local community groups as well. So they're going to be a kind of management

group within the project. It came from the films that we've made. We want to

give them a wider circulation. The website that we have is not powerful

enough to take that. So we want to move the website on. At the same time,

children have very little interest in or control in that. So parents do visit the

site, but not in massive numbers. So we want to re-vamp the site so it has

different areas run by different people. So the children's section will be run

by the children's committee, the parents, governors – there will be different

elements. Creative Partnerships is helping to fund this. (Headteacher PH).

Does the school involve parents in project development, consultation, planning or delivery?

No
17%

Yes
83%
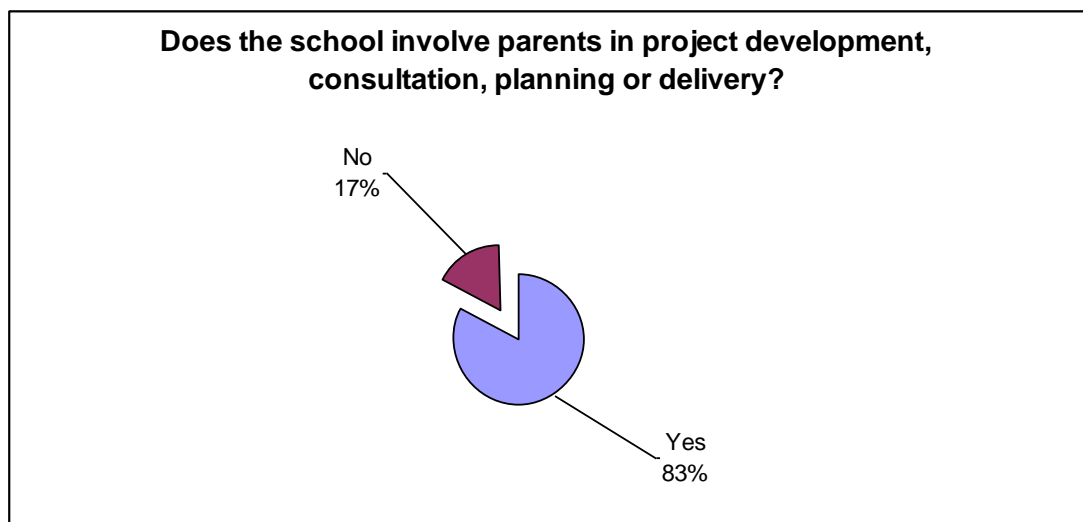
Although schools can plan for parental involvement at any of these stages,

invitations to final events (performances, exhibitions, journeys) are the predominant

experience on offer. Schools also share projects with parents in assemblies, open

afternoons, films documenting the project, and by giving free CDs and DVDs of

children's work. Final events and products are the experiences most accessed by

parents according to school surveys, and some school senior staff reflect in

questionnaires on how to involve parents at earlier stages of project development.

Parents at Bevois Town Primary School, Southampton

> *Big challenges: our aim for the future is to place much more emphasis on parental involvement at the beginning of the creative projects.*

> *These projects may be miles away from what Bengali parents are familiar with in terms of their own schooling and what school is like now in Bangladesh. For white middle class parents it's all more familiar, more transparent. We need to communicate the purposes of these projects, the learning involved, to parents who may not see those elements.*

School staff report that parents communicate their support for creative projects orally and informally, and that this feedback has a positive influence on overall parent-school communication.

Display of artwork at Bevois Town Primary School, Southampton

Display at Lauriston Primary School, Hackney

Display at Lauriston Primary School, Hackney

Notice board at Jessons Primary School, Dudley

Parents at an evening of multimedia presentations to launch a school website on personal, social and emotional health at Stoke Newington Media Arts and Science College, Hackney

Schools' views on the impact of creative projects

Schools receive feedback from parents in a variety of ways including surveys and questionnaires, verbal feedback, letters and emails. One school listed the following kinds of feedback: sending out parent questionnaires, using evaluation sheets at events, home/school diaries and parent governors (Peases West Primary School, Durham).

How schools receive feedback from parents about projects

- Surveys/questionnaires 4%
- Interactive display 5%
- Through other adult 9%
- Through child 24%
- Guestbook 7%
- Verbal feedback 35%
- Letters or emails 16%
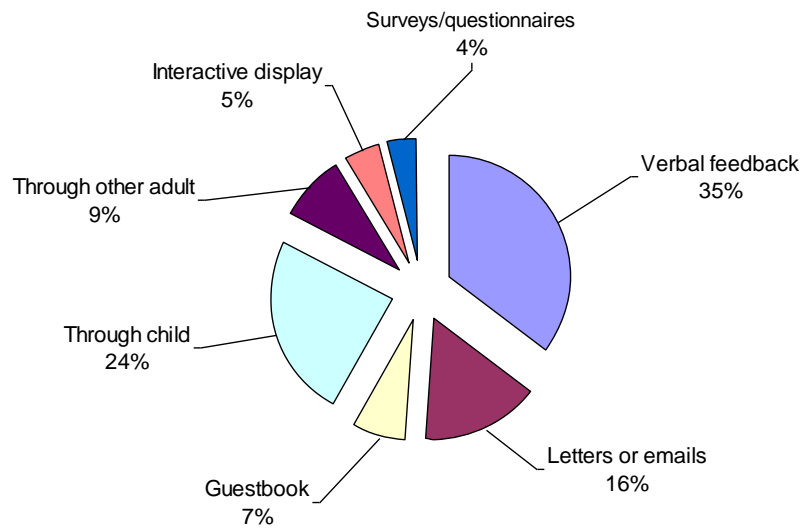
Record and feedback book kept by Family learning worker Margrave Primary School, Hull

FAMILY LEARNING DAY- STAFF FEEDBACK
GARDENING FUN

Good Day - everyone got stuck in and all the children made all activities

Good day - all the staff were very friendly and I thoroughly enjoyed the day. many thanks.

Lots of activities and materials for everyone. A very busy day, with lots of happy faces - big and small. It was super having so many adult helpers - mums, dads and grandma When is the next one? Thanks

Lots of things to do - very busy day - Rachel & were great with the children. Thank you.

Enjoyed all the activities, lots of fun and helpers were great. Thanks.

Feedback sheet from Gardening Day organised by Family Learning day, working on garden part funded by Creative Partnerships

Several senior staff comment that usually the point of contact between parents and school is a complaint or a concern ('Parents normally come in to school to deal with a problem') and that the inviting nature of creative projects motivates parents to come into school to make positive comments, often for the first time, such as (according to schools' questionnaires):

'This is just like Disneyland'

'It's fantastic, the school is so colourful, full of children's work'

'It's amazing what children can do'

'This is so beautiful it should be in gallery.'

'It's been great to work with my child'

'I would like more workshops where can work with the kids'

This has been such an opportunity for my child [in a secondary Pupil Referral Unit]. They would never have participated in mainstream school. I am so proud of their achievement.

Some schools report success in sustaining and extending these initial 'feel good' responses through a range of outreach activities. These include having a family link worker, organising parents' craft clubs, forming committees of parents to support projects, offering transportation to and from outside events, and providing a parents' resource room and crèche. Some schools offer workshops for parents that mirror children experiences, or form adult versions of children's opportunities such as a choir or gardening club. Some schools feel that parents develop confidence by taking small steps through familiar activities such as sewing, cooking or crafts rather than opera or filmmaking. Some schools also elicit parents' feedback on projects through surveys, guestbooks and postcards, and use this feedback to build on parents' interests, as these responses from schools' questionnaires indicate:

Parents came with us to the British Art show and were invited to the children's follow up art exhibition, and parents took part in the community play which was written for our 70th birthday celebration.

Regular meetings are held for parents to meet with the Learning Links leaders and be part of the school community for learning. Parents can put forward their own ideas and give their skills and interests to pupil learning too.

Parents are involved in a committee to run next phase of the project.

We have a family link worker who encourages parents from different ethnic communities to participate in school events.

We have applied for family learning funding so parents can attend events/workshops with their children eg children's opera, mask making.

We ask parents to complete evaluations after events, which includes a section for ideas for future projects. We have a small group of parents who meet for coffee once a week and they often come up with good ideas, for instance they recommended a potter and we had a trial workshop with her.

One headteacher noted that 'parents' interest [in school] is improving because of the project '.

All performance work gets pupils and parents into school. We often struggle to get our parents in, but inspirational, exciting, high quality performance encourages pupils and parents to come into school to enjoy school in a positive atmosphere.

How schools think creative projects involve parents in their children's learning

Category	Value
Make difference to child's attitude to school	48
Reflect family experience or culture	31
Proud of children's accomplishment	57
See children happy and enthusiastic	59
Creates positive atmosphere in school	55
Helps parents understand broader curriculum	56
Allow parents to see what how chn learning	55
Make parents feel at home in school	41
Improve home-school communication	43

Barriers to parental involvement

Schools cite parents' working hours as the main barriers to participation, and also parents' lack of confidence to be part of their children's learning experiences. Schools' questionnaires and interviews often reflect a sense of frustration.

Schools' perceptions of some of the challenges in involving parents: responses from questionnaires

Category	Value
Funding	27
Access to school building	6
Different skills and resources	22
Disinterest	35
Lack of English	13
Working hours	51
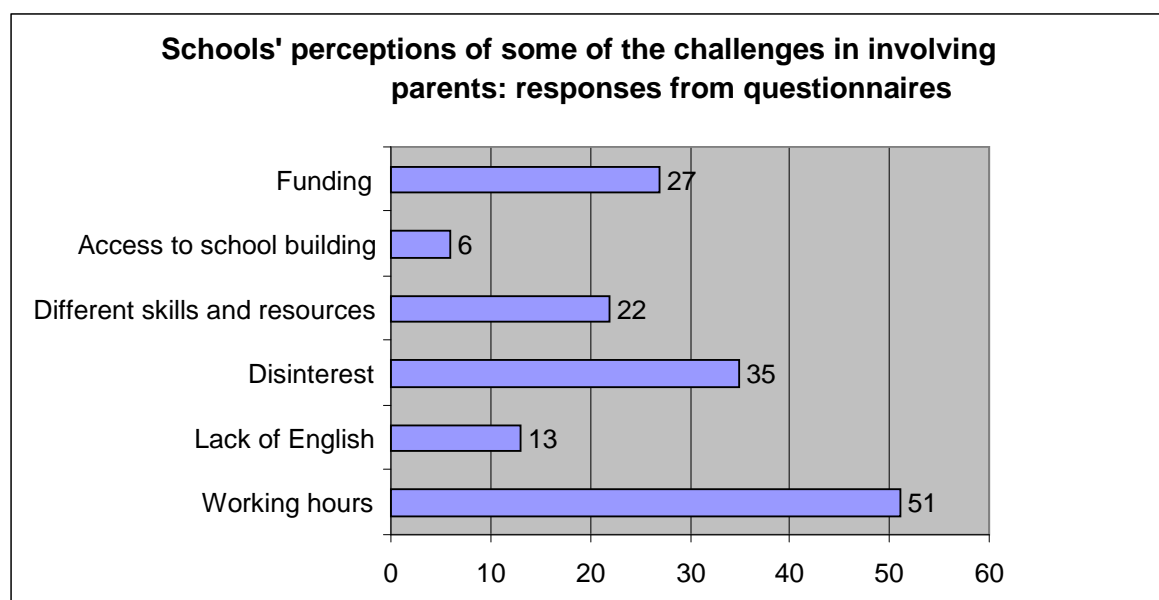
Whatever the school does to try and encourage parental involvement...this tends to fall rather flat with minimum participation and a lack of response. There is usually a lot of interest but many of our parents work and therefore need their involvement to take place during a weekend. This is not viable for teachers who already work very long hours and catch up with paperwork during the weekend.

Unfortunately only 4 parents took part out of a possible 300, despite the fact that each parent received a personal letter inviting them to become involved and learn mural techniques and work alongside the children. An inset was also arranged for all parents involved, yet again only 4 attended.

No matter how approachable we try and be some people will not come in for whatever reason.

Our parents are working. You need two salaries, and we have a high number of single parents. You also see a lot of children collected by child minders and after-school clubs, large numbers of children going home with them. It's like a walking bus. Creative partnerships could think about the role of these carers. (Headteacher VH)

It's bad enough trying to get all the kids to come, let alone parents.
Parents don't have the skills or expertise that we need in projects, so their 'help' would be at a very low level. (Secondary school coordinator)

The local authority decided to make all public spaces non-smoking, so all the school grounds are non-smoking. An unexpected consequence of that was that

some parents are no longer so willing to attend, although they can go and stand outside the gate. We've tried to make them feel welcome, but they still feel like they're being patronised in a way. Some parents have said, 'We're not coming any more if we can't have a cigarette'. It took such a small thing – the relationships are still very fragile. And it's something that white middle class professionals need to be more aware of. (Headteacher)

Whilst schools are able to identify clear links between creative approaches and parental involvement and are keen to extend such provision, senior managers also recognise the impact on staff time and school resources.

Assemblies or school performances usually have the most attendance by parents, followed by community events as long as they are organised after school or in the evening. Obviously this isn't always possible and demands a great deal of additional teacher time.

Although we do have a number of parents who are difficult to engage in school activities, most of our parents are pleased to know about the creative work done in school. Some parents have already volunteered to run an after school art club. Involving parents would need more time given to teachers to initiate/organise events.

School staff feel that creative projects 'make parents feel good about the school' and are valuable in engaging parents, but that some parents mistrust schools and what they see as authority figures, stemming from their own school experiences. School staff feel that parents may sometimes need to have the same experiences of play and creativity that children have. Several staff members acknowledge that 'some teachers are scared of parents' and 'you've got to have parents trusting you'. In some instances, schools cite in questionnaires recent security requirements as preventing parental participation.

Culturally several of our parents feel that the Arts are not as important as the 3 Rs!

Recent legislation regarding Criminal Record Bureau checks makes it awkward to invite adults into school during the school day.

Time and space/organisation are crucial to success and difficult to manage in a busy school.

School surveys and interviews reflected staff concerns that involving parents requires not only time, organisation and commitment but also taking account of multiple and sometimes complex perspectives especially in schools where relationships with parents can be fragile. Senior staff acknowledge that most parents need a real incentive to contribute to the life of the school and that some parents could feel intimidated by teachers and the school environment. However, for schools which already have a good level of parental involvement, creative programmes are seen to deepen and enhance this involvement by inviting specific groups of parents to contribute expertise or resources: in one primary school, for example, Turkish parents were invited to help sew a large textile display. Where schools do not have a good level of parental involvement, creative programmes are seen as effective ways to begin the process of inviting parents in.

5. Project conclusions

The creative curriculum can have a positive impact on home-school communication. Children's enthusiasm for creative projects leads them to talk at home about what they do in school and parents in turn become enthusiastic about what the school offers. Results are circular: children do interesting things, talk to parents about this work, and parents are motivated to find out more by becoming involved in children's learning and in the life of the school.

The home discussions generated by a creative curriculum can enable parents to develop perspectives on their children as learners, and these perspectives can increase parents' sense of 'efficacy' in relation to children's learning (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997). Parents feel that they understand what children are doing in school and what children are gaining from these experiences. This understanding enables parents to join in and support children's interests and enthusiasms, either by contributing their own skills and expertise, by learning alongside children, or by ensuring children continue these interests in after-school clubs or classes. This developing understanding of how children learn also provides parents with positive points of contact with the school

Parents believe that creative projects can motivate children to be in school and have a significant, long-term impact on children's confidence, skills, wider learning, overall development and life chances. One of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) key constructs of parental involvement is parents' strong sense of their children's unique characteristics; parents see a creative curriculum providing real opportunities for 'personalised learning' where children thrive as individual learners within group activities, and that a creative curriculum gives children 'an outlook on ambition' by providing real-life contacts and contexts for leaning and skills. Parents perceive arts partners in schools as what Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (ibid.) characterise as 'high involvement' teachers who are positive about children.

Parents believe that a creative curriculum can contribute strongly to a distinctive school ethos where children and parents feel pride in their school. This feeling continues even when children no longer attend the school, particularly where creative projects leave a lasting visible legacy in the form of architecture, murals, mosaics, sculptures or gardens.

A range of models of creative partnership can involve parents, although parents tend mainly to access final products and performances. Parents could be invited to participate in earlier stages of planning and development, through interactive displays, meetings and adult versions of children's experiences. Schools which utilise Family Link Workers and offer Family Learning courses as part of a creative curriculum are able to engage parents and sustain their participation by offering adults ongoing opportunities to play, practise and learn. For most of the schools in this research, parental involvement was not a focus of creative projects. Coordination with Family Learning approaches would increase the potential for this to take place on a wider scale.

A creative curriculum can offer low-risk invitations to parents to become involved in school. Creative programmes positively enhance parents' perceptions of the 'general invitations, demands and opportunities' from school (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler) and widen parents' range of 'permissible' activities and behaviours in relation to the school. These activities and behaviours often involve 'little c' creativity (Craft 2001) which bridge home and school contexts. Parents tend to feel confident and comfortable making a contribution, whether they are using their own skills or learning along with children. Because parents perceive creative projects as an invitation and may perceive the core curriculum as a demand, a creative curriculum has the potential to reach parents in ways that a basic skills core curriculum may not. A sustained creative agenda can offer 'multiple invitations, opportunities and requests' to parents which are welcoming and proactive. These invitations have the

power to make a positive difference in parents' involvement decisions, which are 'recursive rather than linear' (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler). Schools which use creative projects to make ongoing offers and invitations to parents send clear messages that parents are welcome and valued by the school. Creative programmes generate what Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler describe as 'inviting climates' in schools, developing the school as a community which is meaningful for parents and families. Creative projects give parents reasons to come into schools and make positive comments.

The benefits to children of work in a creative curriculum can extend to parents. Children's engagement can lead parents to reflect on their own experience as learners, and this experience can cause parents to take-up cultural and other learning opportunities for themselves as well as for their children. Creative approaches to learning can work as agents of curriculum change and processes of innovation which reach beyond the school to engage parents and communities. A key theme in parent interviews is the sense of being valued by the school in creative projects, and feeling as that the project takes them to a new, special place where they have never been before. According to the DfES (2003) parents want more and deeper involvement in schools; a creative agenda is an effective way to work towards higher levels of participation.

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Appendix 1

Parental Involvement in Creative Partnership Projects National Survey of schools
Name of school
School address
LEA
School telephone:
Name of person completing survey and your role *eg Head teacher, Deputy head, Creative Coordinator*
Contact email
Are you willing to take part in a more in-depth discussion with the researchers, either in person or by telephone? *please tick* **Yes**   **No**

1. **Creative projects in your school**
   List the creative projects in your school since September 2005 <u>and</u> any ongoing projects through Summer/Autumn 2006. **You can attach this information if you have it in another format**.

Creative project or creative focus, title of project *eg dance, poetry, Talk and Textiles…*	Year group/any targeted groups of children	Dates/duration	Funded by eg Creative Partnerships, or other: EiC/EAZ, CfBT, Family Learning, Specialist Schools Trust…

2. How are projects communicated to parents?

Please tick all that apply and comment in detail if you can

Letter home	
School newsletter	
Notices	
Translation in any languages	
Word of mouth	
Parents meeting	
School event or assembly	
Personal invitation	
Community event	
Permission slips for trips or children being photographed	
Local media	
Other	

3. Do projects involve parents in consultation, planning or delivery?

Please tick all that apply

Family workshops or classes	
Meetings, coffee mornings	
Participation with children	
Parents' knowledge, resources or skills	

Local businesses	
Community groups	
Translating and languages	
Other	

Please comment in further detail if you can:

4. Have projects involved events or presentations for parents?

Please tick all that apply

Assembly	
Community event	
After school event	
Trip to cultural event or institution	
Performance	
Other	

Please comment in further detail if you can:

5. How do you receive feedback from parents about a project?

Verbal feedback	
Letters or emails	
Guestbook	
Though child	
Though other adult	
Other	

Give an example of something a parent has said:

Has a project helped families to use particular facilities or courses, or to visit local cultural centres eg museums, galleries? Which ones?

6. Give an example of what children have told you about their parents' responses to projects.

7. Have projects planned for home-school links through

Homework	
Children researching a topic with parents	
Children and parents finding out about language, culture or community	
Children interviewing family members	
Children making something at home	
Children finishing work at home	
Other	

Please comment in further detail if you can.

8. **How do you think creative projects involve parents in their children's learning?**

Improve home – school communication	
Make parents feel more 'at home' in the school	
Give parents a better understanding of their child's education	
Allow parents to see what and how their child is learning	
Help parents to discover new aspects of their child	
Create a positive atmosphere in the school	
See that children are happy and enthusiastic	
Feel proud of children's accomplishments	
Reflect family experience or culture	
Make a real difference to child's attitude about school	

9. **What are some of the challenges in involving parents in creative projects?**

Parents working hours	
Parents lack of English	
Parents disinterest	
Parents different skills and resources	
Access to school building	
Funding	

Please comment in further detail if you can.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Kimberly Safford and Olivia O'Sullivan
Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
London SE1 8QW

on behalf of Creative Partnerships

Appendix 2 Parents questionnaire, also used as basis for taped interviews

1. How did you find out about the project(s)? (Tick all that apply)

Letter from teacher   Letter from school

Notice in school   Notice in classroom

Child told me about it   Other adult told me about it

School event   Community event

Personal invitation   Phone call

Local media   Other

2. Describe what your child has told you about the project(s) or about the artist(s).

3. How have you seen or experienced the project? Please tick all that apply

Whole-school or class assembly	
Display in school or in class	
Saw it by chance as I was dropping off or collecting child	
Child brought work home	
School journey	
After-school event	
Community event	
I have not seen the project	

4. How do you think the project has made a difference to your child, either at school or at home?

5. Can you indicate any other ways in which you think the project(s) have had an influence on your child? Tick any of the areas below that apply

Enthusiasm for school	
Attendance	
Connects to home experience or culture	
Ability in this particular art form	
Improved or new friendships	
Improved relationships with teachers/other adults	
Communication and language	
Improvements in other school subjects	
Wants to develop these skills outside of school	
Wants to do this at home	
Wants to learn more	

Has the school project resulted in any activity that you've done with your child or talked about together? Where and how did this happen?

Has the project helped you to use particular facilities or courses or to visit local cultural centres, museums or galleries? Which ones?

6. Has the project changed the way you feel about the school in any way? Please tick all that apply.

I feel that home – school communication has improved	
I feel more 'at home' in the school	
I have a better understanding of my child's education	
I can see how my child is learning	
I have discovered new aspects of my child	
I know the teachers better	
I am able to meet other parents	
There is a positive atmosphere in the school	
My child is happy and enthusiastic	
Additional comments	

7. How do you think that projects like these could help your child in future?

8. Projects like these are meant to create opportunities for children and families to learn. How do you think the project has helped your or your children's learning?

9. Do you think there is anything you could have contributed to this project?

               yes   no

If yes, what would this be

Skills	
Resources	
Contacts in the community	
Languages	
In-class support	
Other	

10. Is there anything more you would like to learn about this particular art form?

How would you most like to learn about it? (Tick all that apply)

In-school workshop	
Supporting the artist & teacher in class	
After-school workshop	
Family workshop, with children	
Adults-only workshop	
Weekend or evening class	
Trip to a cultural event or institution	
Other	

11. Are there any other comments you'd like to make:

**12. What do you and your family enjoy doing? These are broad categories!
You can tick the boxes and you can also say more if you wish.**

Media (films, computer, television, radio, photography)

Crafts (sewing, knitting, making things)

Reading (books, magazines, libraries, online websites)

Sport, dance, gym, martial arts, exercise

Painting, drawing, modelling, sculpture, construction

Church, mosque or temple activities or classes

Museums, galleries, theatre, cultural events

Music, singing, playing an instrument

Any other activities (such as games, volunteering, visiting friends and family, cooking, gardening, walking…)

13. How would you describe your family's ethnic background? Please list languages other than English you or other members of your family can read, write or speak. (Tick any of the categories below from the Department for Education and Skills, if you wish.)

White	Black or Black British
[ ] British	[ ] Caribbean
[ ] Irish	[ ] African
[ ] Traveller of Irish Heritage	[ ] Any other Black background
[ ] Gypsy/Roma	
[ ] Any other White background	
Mixed	[ ] **Chinese**
[ ] White and Black Caribbean	
[ ] White and Black African	
[ ] White and Asian	
[ ] Any other mixed background	
Asian or Asian British	[ ] **Any other ethnic background**
[ ] Indian	
[ ] Pakistani	
[ ] Bangladeshi	
[ ] Any other Asian background	
[ ] **I do not wish an ethnic background category to be recorded**	

Thank you for completing this questionnaire
Kimberly Safford and Olivia O'Sullivan
Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
London SE1 8QW

On behalf of Creative Partnerships

Appendix 3
Schools responding to questionnaires

School name	Type	LA
1. Abbey Hulton	Primary	Stoke on Trent
2. Aynsley	Primary	Stoke on Trent
3. Bacton	First	Norfolk
4. Bardfield	Primary	Essex
5. Barnes	Infant	Sunderland
6. Berrybrook (formerly Underhill)	Primary	Wolverhampton
7. Bevois Town	Primary	Southampton
8. Bidston Avenue	Primary	Wirral
9. Brocklewood	Infant/Nursery	Nottingham
10. Budehaven Community	Secondary	Cornwall
11. Callington Community College	Secondary	Cornwall
12. Columbia	Primary	Hackney
13. Corporation Road Community	Primary	Darlington
14. Crab Lane	Primary	Manchester
15. Crescent	Primary	Stoke on Trent
16. Earlsdon	Primary	Coventry
17. Easington Colliery	Primary	Durham
18. Florence Brown	Special	Bristol
19. Forestdale	Primary	Birmingham
20. Gallions	Primary	Newham
21. Gallions Mount	Primary	Greenwich
22. Gay Elms	Primary	Bristol
23. Graiseley	Primary	Wolverhampton
24. Haggerston	Primary	Hackney
25. Hopton First	First	Norfolk
26. Hothfield	Junior	Bradford
27. Jackfield	Infant	Stoke on Trent
28. James Rennie	Special	Cumbria
29. Jesse Boot	Primary	Nottingham
30. Jessons CE	Primary	Dudley
31. Jubilee	Primary	Hackney
32. Kiveton Park Meadows	Primary	Sheffield
33. Lutley	Primary	Dudley
34. Marfleet	Primary	Hull
35. Mithian School	Primary	Cornwall
36. Montpelier	Primary	Plymouth
37. Moor Green	Infant	Birmingham
38. Mount Pleasant	Primary	Darlington
39. Mousehole CP	Primary	Cornwall
40. Mudesley	First	Norfolk
41. New City	Primary	Newham
42. Newlyn	Junior and Infant	Cornwall
43. North Dewes	Middle	Norfolk
44. Oldbury Court	Primary	Bristol
45. Peases West	Primary	Durham
46. Petteril Park Community	Primary	Cumbria

47.	Redbridge Community	Secondary	Southampton
48.	Sandhurst	Junior	Lewisham
49.	Seagrave	Primary	Nottingham
50.	Sidley Community	Primary	East Sussex
51.	St Helens Catholic	Primary	Barnsley
52.	St Josephs RC High School	Secondary	Slough
53.	St Tudy VA	Primary	Cornwall
54.	Stoke Newington Media Arts and Science College	Secondary	Hackney
55.	Summerhill	Junior	Bristol
56.	Sutton Park	Primary	Hull
57.	Teyfant	Community	Bristol
58.	The Melbourne Centre	PRU	Southampton
59.	Thorn	Primary	Lancashire
60.	Westcott	Primary	Hull
61.	Westlea	Primary	Durham
62.	Westmeads	Infant	Kent
63.	Westmoor	Primary	Newcastle
64.	Wheatlands	Primary	Redcar & Cleveland
65.	Whitstable	Junior	Kent